

New US Survey Data Highlights Opportunities
for Companies to Use the AdChoices Icon for
Consumer-Friendly Privacy Disclosures

AdChoices

THE WORLD'S GATEWAY TO PRIVACY INFORMATION



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DIGITAL
ADVERTISING
ALLIANCE

 YourAdChoices.com
 AboutPoliticalAds.org
 PrivacyRights.info

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To evaluate ongoing consumer awareness and perception around the AdChoices icon, the Digital Advertising Alliance (DAA) conducted a survey of 1,000 US adults in February 2021.

The results of the survey have significant implications for industry use of the icon and point to broad opportunities to use it for enhanced privacy disclosure across web sites, apps, ads, and other platforms.

Specifically, the survey found broad consumer awareness of AdChoices and discovered significant interest in using the icon as an access point for all information related to data collection and use, not just information about interest-based advertising.

While this survey was conducted among a US audience, it is supported by similar findings in surveys conducted across other markets, such as the [EU/EEA](#)¹ and [Canada](#)².

Survey Highlights

- The overwhelming majority (82%) of consumers recognize the AdChoices icon.
- Most consumers (81%) understand the icon broadly offers them choice and control as it pertains to advertising.
- Nearly seven in ten respondents (69%) find the AdChoices icon "useful."
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) say the AdChoices icon is "easy to understand" as a way to access privacy information
- Three-quarters (75%) of respondents say the AdChoices icon increases their trust in websites and mobile apps
- A large majority (80%) say the AdChoices icon would increase their trust in an emerging digital platform.

INTRODUCTION

From the earliest drawings on cave walls, human beings have used simple visual symbols to convey more complex information. In the digital era, the utility of such visual cues has expanded dramatically, as interactive icons have become one-click gateways to information and choices about the online experience.

The most recognized of those icons in the privacy space is the blue AdChoices triangle, which was launched by the Digital Advertising Alliance, a joint initiative of the digital advertising industry, in 2010.

The AdChoices icon was designed as a simple and universal symbol for users to get information and choices around interest-based advertising, and it was widely adopted across the industry by major advertisers, publishers, technology providers, and platforms as an intuitive tool for people to see the types of information being collected and the choices they had over its use. Today, thousands of brands leverage AdChoices as a way to be proactive with consumers about privacy information and choices.

In recent years, the AdChoices icon has been served globally on ads to consumers up to one trillion times a month—or nearly 200 times monthly on average to each of the world's 4.66 billion internet users. AdChoices notices are now served across 36 countries in 28 languages. Due in part to that ubiquitous exposure, there is little doubt that the AdChoices icon has become the world's gateway to privacy information. In this report, U.S. survey findings serve to solidify this perspective.

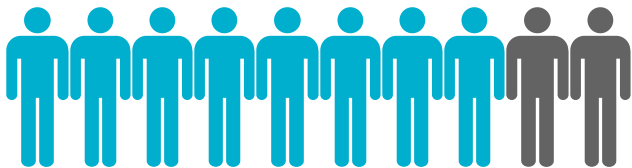
82% of Respondents Recognize the AdChoices Icon



The utility of any symbol rests on its recognition, and—not surprisingly—the AdChoices icon has incredibly broad recognition with more than eight in ten survey respondents (82%) saying they recognize it from ads, websites, and/or apps.

These results indicate there is significant untapped potential in using the AdChoices icon more broadly by publishers and brands for information and disclosures around the collection and use of data on websites and apps.

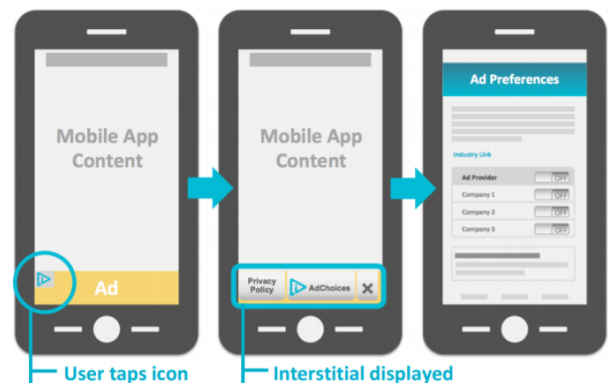
As thousands of brands and publishers have already integrated the icon into the design of their sites and apps, there are a huge range of “off-the-shelf” models for such use that are familiar to consumers and policymakers.



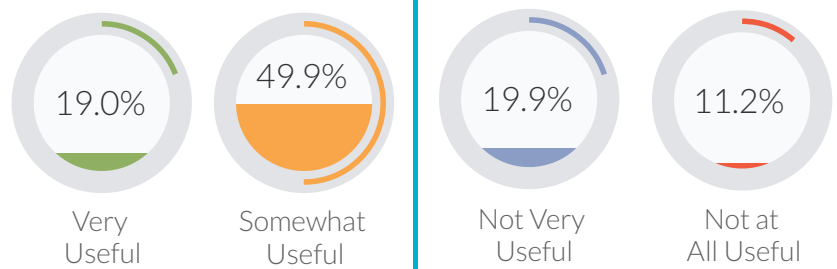
More than 8 in 10 Users Correctly Identify the Icon's Purpose or Effect

Beyond simple recognition, consumers also had a strong understanding of what the AdChoices icon means. Eight in ten survey respondents (81%) said it provided information about privacy or control over ads, and more than half of that group (42%) correctly identified its primary purpose as giving “choices and information about privacy and data collection.”

By comparison, a [similar survey](#)³ around sharing tools found that less than 40% knew the purpose for five of the most widely-used social sharing icons, meaning more people understand how to get privacy information through the AdChoices icon than use the primary sharing tools on the Android, iOS, or Windows platform.



7 in 10 Users Find the AdChoices Icon 'Useful'

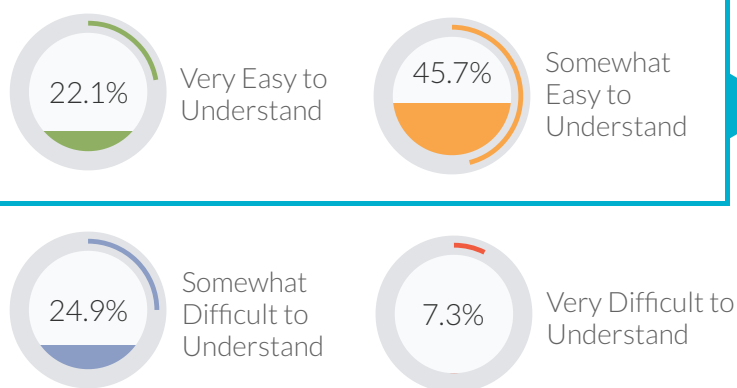


More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) said the privacy-related information available through the AdChoices icon is useful, once again illustrating not only the current value of the AdChoices-based approach but also the opportunity to expand the information and disclosures provided through that tool.

Similarly, approximately two-thirds of respondents said they found AdChoices an easy way to understand how to get information about privacy and data collection (64%) and control their choices about the types of ads they receive (68%).

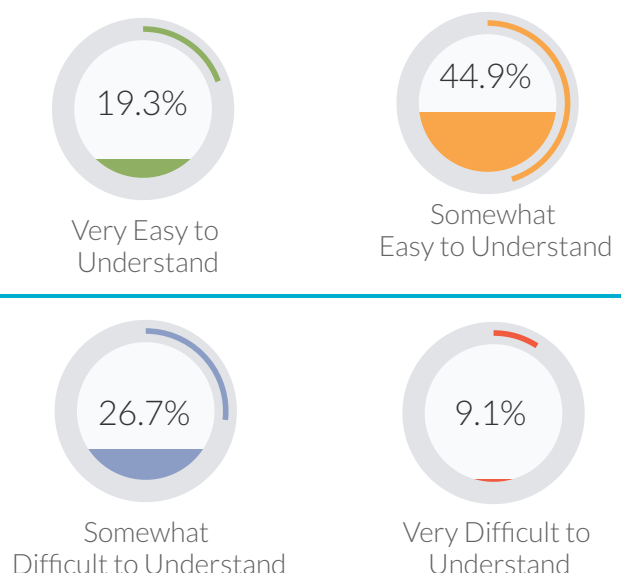
This ease-of-use is reinforced by the broad implementation of the icon today, as hundreds of companies, representing thousands of brands, have integrated short-form notices about data collection and interest-based advertising practices.

These “short-form” notices provide a summary of key information while offering links or pop-ups to longer form information, such as definitions, privacy policies, terms of use, or “cookie” notices. This standard short-form, real-time presentation allows brands to present the most important takeaways with a consistent brand voice and in an easy-to-understand format.



68% of Users Find the AdChoices Icon 'Easy to Understand' as a Means to Control Data Collection for Advertising

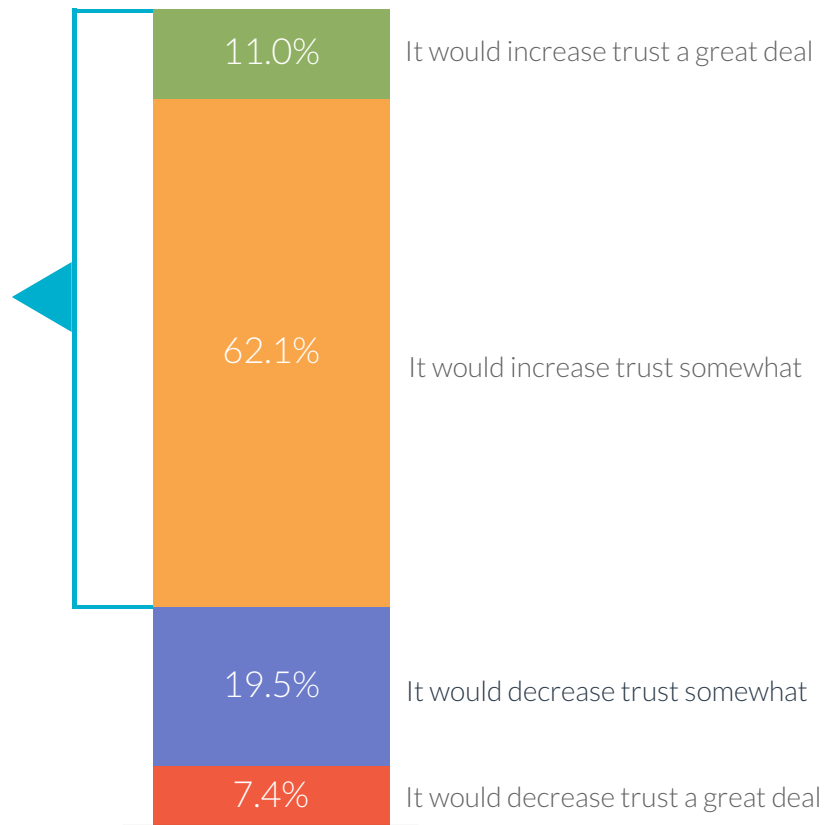
Two-Thirds of Users Find the AdChoices Icon 'Easy to Understand' as a Means to Access Privacy Information



73%

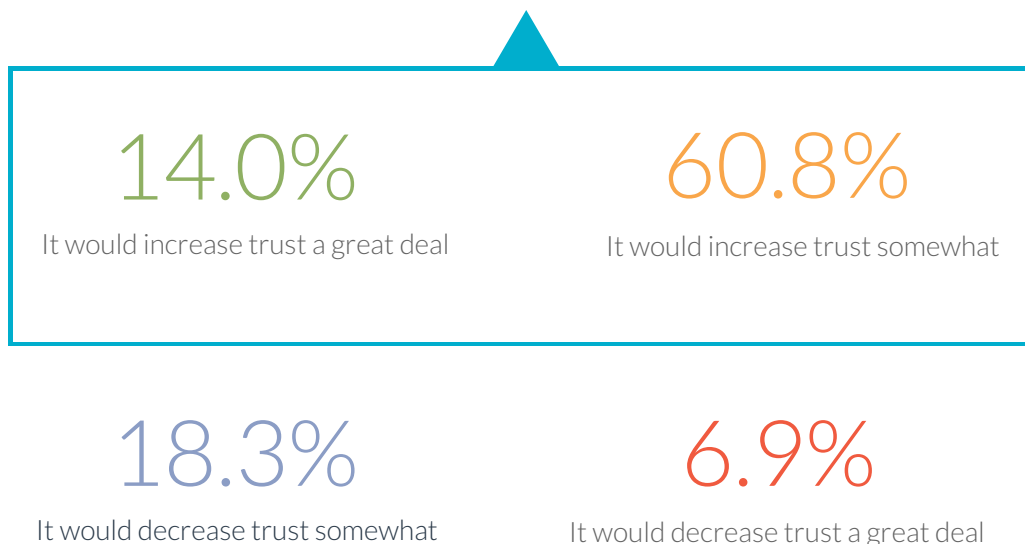
of Users Say the AdChoices Icon Increases Trust in an Online or Mobile Ad

Roughly three-quarters of survey respondents said that seeing the AdChoices icon would increase their trust in the place they saw it, regardless of whether it appeared in an ad (73%) and on a website/app (75%).

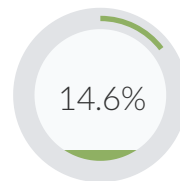


75%

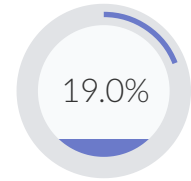
of Respondents Say the AdChoices Icon Increases Trust in Sites & Apps



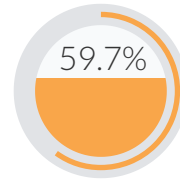
74% of Users Say the AdChoices Icon Triggers Greater Acceptance to Use Sites & Apps



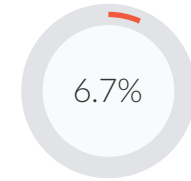
Much more likely to use



Somewhat less likely to use



Somewhat more likely to use



Much less likely to use

The increased trust accompanying the use of the AdChoices icon as a gateway for privacy information had an extraordinary halo effect in use. Almost three-quarters of respondents (74%) reported a greater likelihood to use a site or app that displays the YourAdChoices icon where it is used to deliver information about privacy and data collection practices.

Additionally, approximately 80% say they would extend user trust to emerging digital platforms that display the icon when these companies use the icon as a pathway to consumer control.

It would increase trust a great deal

16.4%

It would increase trust somewhat

63.3%

It would decrease trust somewhat

15.7%

It would decrease trust a great deal

4.6%

8 in 10 Users
Say the AdChoices Icon Tied to Control Bolsters Trust in Emerging Digital Platforms

CONCLUSION

While historically use of the AdChoices icon has involved interest-based advertising, it has always had the potential for use in broader disclosures and compliance around privacy and data practices.

The AdChoices icon is now recognized by consumers around the world as a simple way to get privacy information and choices directly from the ads, websites, and apps, and forward-thinking brands and publishers can take advantage of that consumer acceptance by utilizing the AdChoices icon more broadly on their properties.

Such disclosures could include existing corporate policies and practices, local or regional regulatory requirements (such as those of California, among other jurisdictions) and/or new short-form disclosures that provide important information in consumer-friendly formats.

If you are interested in using the AdChoices icon to help meet consumers' disclosure needs, please visit digitaladvertisingalliance.org/adchoices.

Methodology

The survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey among 1,052 US adults from February 17-21, 2021. Based on a confidence interval of 95 percent, the margin of error for the survey is +/- 3 percent.

1 [European Advertising Consumer Research Report 2021](https://edaa.eu/european-advertising-consumer-research-report-2021/)

<https://edaa.eu/european-advertising-consumer-research-report-2021/>

2 [2020 Consumer Awareness Survey](https://youradchoices.ca/en/news/2020/10/2/2020-consumer-awareness-survey)

<https://youradchoices.ca/en/news/2020/10/2/2020-consumer-awareness-survey>

3 [Social Sharing Icon Recognition Study](https://elie.net/blog/web/choose-the-right-sharing-icon-to-boost-user-engagement/)

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ABOUT THE DAA

The Digital Advertising Alliance (DAA) is an independent not-for-profit organization which establishes and enforces responsible privacy practices for relevant digital advertising, while giving consumers information and control over the types of digital advertising they receive. The DAA runs the YourAdChoices, mobile AppChoices, PoliticalAds and PrivacyRights.info programs. Underlying the DAA's efforts are the DAA Self-Regulatory Principles, including updates to address changing technologies and business models around multi-site, mobile, and cross-device data. Compliance with the DAA Principles is independently enforced for all companies in digital advertising by BBB National Programs (BBBNP) and the Association of National Advertisers (ANA). The DAA is managed by a consortium of the leading national advertising and marketing trade groups, including the 4A's; American Advertising Federation; ANA; Interactive Advertising Bureau; and Network Advertising Initiative, with the advice of BBBNP.

